

San Diego Convention Center Selects Fentress/Portman/Civitas Design Team to Design Bayside Expansion

Increased exhibit space, environmental sustainability and a 5-acre waterfront park are hallmarks of iconic conceptual design

(San Diego) – Nov. 9, 2010 -- Today the Board of Directors of the San Diego Convention Center Corporation (SDCCC) voted to approve Fentress Architects/John Portman & Associates/Civitas Inc. (Fentress/Portman/Civitas) as the design team for the proposed Phase 3 expansion of the San Diego Convention Center and the possible addition of up to a 500-room hotel to support the expansion. The Fentress/Portman/Civitas team, a collaboration of international, award-winning design firms, was one of five finalists selected to submit conceptual design studies and fee proposals for full expansion design services in a Request for Proposals issued by the SDCCC in August 2010.

“Fentress’ design for the Convention Center builds on the success of our iconic facility by embracing the waterfront location with a new, 5-acre rooftop park while delivering an expanded facility that will help drive our regional economy, generate jobs and build on our reputation as a world-class convention and meeting destination,” said San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders. “The Convention Center continues to be one of San Diego’s strongest assets driving jobs, tax revenues and economic benefits, all of which will significantly increase when the building expands, and Fentress’ design will take us there.”

Over the past several weeks, the proposed design was thoroughly vetted through a panel of planning and development professionals, regional experts of facility design and was reviewed by a technical advisory committee, as well as a policy committee. Fentress’ plan adds 225,000 square feet (sf) of contiguous exhibit hall space; about 100,000 sf of meeting room space; and a new 80,000 sf ballroom to the current building. When completed, San Diego’s bayside Convention Center will have more than 750,000 sf of contiguous exhibit hall space making larger than any other on the West Coast, moving San Diego ahead of competitors in Los Angeles, Anaheim, San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. In addition, the 80,000 sf ballroom will be the largest ballroom in a convention facility on the West Coast.

“Fentress’ design pays honor to the current architecture while being a win for all of San Diego. It will boost our economy by creating new jobs, build on tourism, our third-largest industry, and ensure San Diego remains at the top of the convention industry by delivering more exhibit and meeting space,” said Bob Nelson, chair of the SDCCC board of directors. “This is a huge win for communities throughout our region. The addition of a 5-acre waterfront park adjacent to the South Embarcadero will create a stunning civic destination for our residents, as well the hundreds of thousands of visitors who come to events at the Convention Center each year.

“Fentress addressed all the key design concerns: From being green and sustainable, to providing flexible exhibit and meeting space, to preserving the view corridors and energizing the waterfront, to adding community services that will build on the civic pride and ownership San Diegans have for this iconic facility,” he added.

“Meeting planners have told us what was most important to them in an expansion of our building, and we believe Fentress can help us create a space that will accommodate their growing attendance, as well as to book new clients who haven’t had the opportunity to come to San Diego due to size constraints,” said SDCCC President and CEO Carol Wallace.

One of the most visually stunning design elements is the innovative use of the top of the proposed expansion – turning the roof into a 5-acre park with 360-degree views of downtown, Coronado and San Diego Bay. Besides hosting outdoor receptions or breakout sessions related to Convention Center events, community events like music festivals and public art displays can also be staged. Plans also include a waterfront promenade on the ground floor, complete with retail shops, pedestrian walk ways and a waterfront transportation center. While Fentress is designing the Convention Center expansion, Portman will design a new 250-500 room hotel adjacent to the current facility that is also part of expansion plans. Civitas, a national leader in landscape architecture and urban design, will be involved in designing the rooftop park and waterfront promenade.

"The Fentress/Portman/Civitas architectural team is delighted to have won this design competition. We look forward to creating a new addition to the San Diego Convention Center that will make San Diego one of the top convention centers in the United States, while providing a sustainable waterfront park for the citizens of San Diego," said Curtis Fentress, principal-in-charge of design at Fentress Architects.

From top to bottom, the proposed Phase 3 expansion would be built using the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED. A preliminary, internal LEED scorecard by the Fentress/Portman/Civitas team indicates that a LEED Gold ranking is possible. Sustainable elements such as energy-efficient lighting, integration of photovoltaic solar panels, storm water retention and water filtration, wind energy, a green roof, recycling and composting have all been folded into the proposed design. Fentress ranks among the Top 10 Green Design Firms in the U.S. and has been pioneering sustainable design since the early 1990s. Portman's commitment to sustainability is underscored by the LEED Gold certification obtained for the firm's offices.

During the Mayor's Citizens Task Force on the San Diego Convention Center Project (MCTF) a different design was presented to members as a "test-fit" for study. The Fentress/Portman/Civitas team developed a completely different design which is much more cost-effective and offers its own unique set of advantages, including:

- Reduced mass and volume
- Reduced exterior envelope/skin
- Exhibit and meeting space conformed to existing number of floors
- Increased ratio of usable space
- Exhibit floor loading at grade
- No exhibit hall exit stair requirements

The Fentress/Portman/Civitas design is 38% less building mass and volume, which should significantly reduce cost estimates presented during the MCTF meetings. A cost estimate based on the design concept unveiled today is expected in the next several months.

Based on findings of the MCTF, the economic benefits of an expanded facility could be significant. The chart below provides a snapshot of the actual year-end fiscal accomplishment the Convention Center generated in FY10, as well as the additional benefits an expansion could generate for San Diego:

FY10 Economic Benefits Generated by Convention Center <i>Includes conventions, meetings and other events between July'09 – June '10.</i>		Potential Annual Economic Benefits of Expansion <i>These numbers would be in addition to current fiscal year benefits.</i>	
Economic Impact	\$ 1.3 Billion	Economic Impact	\$ 698 Million
Direct Spending	\$ 530.1 Million	Direct Spending	\$ 372 Million
Transient Occupancy Tax Revenue (TOT)	\$ 19.2 Million	Transient Occupancy Tax Revenue (TOT)	\$ 16.3 Million
Sales Tax Revenue	\$ 963,586	Sales Tax Revenue	\$ 0.8 Million

Jobs Generated by Events	12,500 jobs	New Permanent Jobs	6,885 jobs
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Feedback from SDCCC clients and the San Diego community was integral to the process, and the Fentress/Portman team worked collaboratively to address needs and concerns. Fentress will finalize a model for the proposed Convention Center expansion, which utilizes 6.86 acres of land adjacent to our current facility. The environmental review and permitting process for the proposed expansion is currently underway. Typically this process takes about 18-24 months.

The following is a square footage summary of the proposed design:

Area	Current	Proposed Expansion	Total
Exhibit Hall	525,701 sf	225,000 sf	750,701 sf
Meeting Rooms	204,114 sf	101,000 sf	305,114 sf
Ballrooms	2 @ 40,000 sf each	1 @ 80,000 sf	160,000 sf (3)

Based on several studies, adding approximately 200,000-250,000 contiguous sf of exhibit space; 100,000 sf of meeting space; and an 80,000 sf ballroom allows the Convention Center to accommodate larger existing business that has outgrown the building, or will soon be reaching capacity; new potential business; as well as the ability to host simultaneous mid-size conventions.

The San Diego Convention Center Corporation manages, markets and operates the San Diego Convention Center. In its 20-year history, the facility has proved to be a vital economic engine generating \$18 billion in regional economic benefits and \$360 million in tax dollars for the city of San Diego. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.visitsandiego.com.

Fentress Architects is an international design firm that passionately pursues the creation of sustainable and iconic public architecture. Curtis Fentress, FAIA, RIBA, was honored in 2010 by the American Institute of Architects with the highest award for public architecture, the Thomas Jefferson Award. He has designed \$26 billion of architectural projects worldwide, visited by 300 million people each year. Designs by Fentress have been honored with more than 350 awards for innovation and design excellence. Founded by Curtis Fentress in 1980, Fentress Architects has design studios in Los Angeles, San Jose, Denver, and Washington, D.C. Visit us online at www.fentressarchitects.com.

John Portman & Associates is an internationally recognized architectural and engineering firm with offices in Atlanta, Georgia and Shanghai, China. Established in 1953, Portman has been designing hotels, universities, offices, trade marts, and mixed-use urban complexes for more than 55 years. The firm provides design services in architecture, master planning, programming, structural engineering, and project management around the world. Recognized worldwide as a leader in hospitality design and urban mixed-use projects, Portman led design efforts for the Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel and Parking Structure. Visit us online at www.portmanusa.com.